Modifications

Many modifications can be made to the embodiments above within the scope of the present invention.

For example, the subject object 210 does not need to be placed on the photographic mat 24 for imaging. More particularly, the subject object 210 may be placed alongside the mat 24 and images recorded so that at least part of the object and mat are visible in each image. However, the user still positions the subject object so that the part which is to appear in the first image each time the 3D computer model is accessed faces in a defined direction relative to the calibration pattern on the mat.

In the embodiments described above, the printer instructions sent from processing apparatus 6 to a customer computer processing apparatus instruct printer 18 to print photographic mat 24 in accordance with the object size. If the size is so large that a photographic mat 24 cannot be printed on a single sheet of paper, then mat data generator 38 may generate data to control printer 18 to print the photographic mat 24 on separate sheets of paper, which can then be placed together to form the photographic mat 34.

In the embodiments described above, the calibration object which is imaged with the subject object has the form of a two-dimensional photographic mat. However, instead of a photographic mat, a three-dimensional calibration object may be used. For example, mat data generator 38 may generate instructions to control printer 18 to print patterns of features on separate sheets, and the sheets may then be folded into or attached to a three-dimensional object, such as a cube. The cube with the sheets attached can then be used as a three-dimensional calibration object.

In the embodiments above, a front marker 170 is provided on the photographic mat, and the user at customer processing apparatus 2, 4 aligns the subject object 210 on the photographic mat so that the part which is to appear in the first image each time the 3D computer model is accessed faces in the direction of the front marker 170. However, instead of providing a front marker 170, the user at a customer processing apparatus 2, 4 may align the subject object with a predetermined feature (or group of features) in the calibration pattern. For example, referring to Figure 2 each group of features 100-128 in the calibration pattern is unique. Accordingly, one of the groups of features may be

designated as a predetermined group with which the part of the subject object to appear in the first image each time the 3D computer model is accessed should be aligned. The calibration pattern is then defined in the coordinate system so that, referring to Figure 3, the y-axis passes through the centre of each of the four features in the designated group, rather than through the front marker 170. Because each group of features is unique, the user can easily see how to align the subject object. In this case, therefore, one of the groups of features in the calibration pattern acts as a front marker and a front marker additional to the calibration pattern is not provided.

In the embodiments above, at step S4-22, instructions about how to align the subject object on the photographic mat are generated by processing apparatus 6, and these are then sent to the customer processing apparatus 2, 4 where they are displayed at step S4-29. However, it is not necessary to generate and display alignment instructions. In particular, by printing the word "FRONT" alongside the front marker 170, the way in which the subject object should be aligned may be self-explanatory.